

Presentation Title

“Bringing Order to Chaos: Using an Enterprise Classification Scheme to Restructure a Shared Drive

Paper

Institutional context

The University of Melbourne is based in Parkville, an inner suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. There are three other campuses within the Melbourne metropolitan area and four regional campuses in the State of Victoria.

There are over 35000 students enrolled and more than 7000 academic and professional staff work at the University.

Following a wide-ranging consultation process in 2005 the University changed its strategic direction in several significant ways.

The University of Melbourne’s Growing Esteem strategy is conceived as a triple helix - three strands of core activities in teaching and learning, research, and knowledge exchange and partnerships - each sharply focused, well-resourced, and mutually supportive. Taken together the three strands define the purpose and character of the University of Melbourne.

The implementation of the Melbourne Model curriculum has seen the previous hundreds of specialist degree courses replaced by a core of six newly-designed undergraduate degrees. A bachelor degree program is no longer managed by a single faculty: students undertake subjects from several different academic disciplines and select units from a suite of University-wide ‘breadth’ subjects. A ‘graduate school’ model of professional education complements the new undergraduate curriculum.

Faculties are responsible for teaching the new generation undergraduate degrees and their new graduate coursework programs, which are housed in a faculty-based Graduate School. Stand-alone Graduate Schools undertake research and knowledge exchange activities, supervise research degree programs and teach into some undergraduate programs.

In 2009, the University adopted Responsible Division Management (RDM) designed to provide cost-effective enabling services that deliver high quality service within the available resources. This approach has been successfully adopted by several North American universities (commonly known as ‘responsibility centre management’, or RCM). It is based on the principle of subsidiarity, defined by the Oxford English dictionary as “ the principle that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level”. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989) First recorded in 1936 and used to define a fundamental principle of Christian social doctrine it has more recently been adopted as a principle guiding the activities of the European Union. At the University of Melbourne this devolved management model represents a renewed commitment to local decision-making and accountability. Business centres in faculties provide a combination of financial, human resources, secretarial, marketing, planning and record-keeping services to support research and teaching activities. Non-academic departments have their own centralised business centre.

The net effect of the Melbourne Model plus RDM is that (within legal limits) faculties, schools and their business centres have a high degree of freedom to choose which standard practices and

University systems they adopt and implement. A strictly top-down or regulatory approach to mandating the use of an ECS won't work in this competitive, pragmatic environment. This is one reason the RDM model includes the concept of 'practice leaders'.

In 2005 the University's records management function moved from the University Secretariat into the Information Services division. The records team, copyright office, web services group and University Archives formed an Information Management Program with a mandate to advise across the University on all aspects of information management.

An early task for the new Information Management program was a comprehensive review of records management policy and procedures. The need for an Enterprise Classification Scheme was identified in that review.

The many uses of an enterprise classification scheme

An enterprise classification scheme consists of a functional classification thesaurus, a tool designed for use in classifying, titling and indexing business records of the organisation and its component parts. It records and standardises common language terms to be used for the description of business functions and activities performed by the organisation in order to provide a controlled vocabulary for records titling.

Functional classification has several advantages over a subject based classification approach. Records are organised according to the context in which they are created. It is a more stable scheme as it is independent of an organisation's structure. Consistent application of functional classification allows "ownership" of files to be shared across different parts of the organisation.

A subject based classification scheme allows resources to be discovered and located and is the preferred approach in libraries. Records managers prefer the functional approach, particularly when linked to records retention and disposal.

There are at least three levels in functional classification. The first is the function, the second is the activity and it is at the third level that transactions or subjects can be introduced. For example the University Library's shared drive manual is found at Information Management (the function), Procedures (the activity) and then in a folder Shared drive manual

The classification scheme may be used to analyse desired recordkeeping outputs during the design of electronic business and information systems, and in the course of developing records disposal categories.

"The process of classification helps describe, organise and control information. It creates order in understanding what an organisation does and how it does it. A simple classification tool can facilitate and enhance the capacity of the organisation to share information and knowledge." (National Archives of Australia, 2003, p.6)

Developing an ECS for the University of Melbourne

The Enterprise Classification Scheme in use at the University of Melbourne was developed by a Senior Records Analyst with the assistance of records management staff and academic and professional staff across the University. More than a hundred people contributed to the development of the scheme.

Development of the ECS was an incremental process, with each stage building on the lessons learned in previous projects.

The Records Analyst had been trained in using DIRKS (Designing and Implementing Record Keeping Systems) Methodology a structured process for designing and implementing recordkeeping systems. DIRKS is based on traditional system design methodologies, but has been adapted to meet recordkeeping objectives.

It was first developed at the Archives Authority of New South Wales and later refined by the National Archives. Subsequently it was outlined in Australian Standard, AS ISO 15489-2002, *Records Management*

There are 8 steps in the DIRKS methodology but it is not a linear process. Each step is independent of the other and DIRKS is designed to be flexible.

Establishing a business classification scheme forms part of Step B in DIRKS methodology.

“A classification scheme is the set of terms and conventions applied in a particular organisational setting to classify, title and retrieve records and other business information (National Archives of Australia, 2003, p.6)

Once a classification tool has been developed it can be incorporated into a wider records management framework.

After joining the University of Melbourne in 2003 the Senior Records Analyst began implementing a functional classification scheme for the University's Percy Grainger Museum. The scheme was used to restructure the museum's records.

Subsequently similar work was carried out within the General Manager's office of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) and the University's Disability Liaison Unit. Neither of these schemes actually went ahead due to the question of availability of TRIM (the University's electronic document records management system) licenses and organisational restructuring. The experience however provided a sound background in what the University was doing in terms of teaching, student services and administration.

Another classification scheme was developed for the School of Nursing (another section of the MDHS faculty). The University Information Analyst worked with the school's own records management consultant to put the new scheme into practice.

When the decision was made to develop an enterprise wide classification scheme, the already completed groundwork proved invaluable.

The project began with benchmarking research based on academic institution classifications found on the web. They were all different in approach and ranged from 11 to 23 functions. From this a list of twelve functions was drawn up and approval to proceed was granted on that basis. Subsequently the list of functions grew to 14. Initially, there was no Collections function as this was thought to be covered by a combination of information management and asset management. However when it was discovered that as well as the Library collections there were 31 Cultural Collections located across the library the Collections function was added.

From these foundations, the approach was to build a working draft by aggregating the work already completed for localised classifications. A working group was formed with staff from the University's Fundraising Office, Advancement, the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences and from the Bio 21 Research Institute. Working group members were chosen because they had an understanding of classification schemes and represented a broad cross-section of the University. Subsequent drafts evolved through extensive consultations with clients across the University.

During the evolution of the Enterprise Classification Scheme, classification cards were created for use in helping staff understand the scheme and apply it to their local workplace.

Finally, the scheme was integrated with the TRIM system and some fine tuning of the scheme was completed by the expert classifiers in the Central Records department.

Because of the cost of licensing, TRIM is not used by all staff; its use is restricted to official record-keeping for the University

“Storing records on shared drives is permitted where, TRIM is not available, so long as files are arranged in accordance with the Enterprise Classification Scheme.” (The University of Melbourne Records Management Policy 2009)

The Enterprise Classification Scheme is published as an online database. It is also available as a set of folders that can be installed on a shared drive (fileserver) or as a set of folders that can be installed in an Outlook email inbox.

Other information systems in wide use at the University were implemented before or concurrently with the development of the ECS. These systems do not use the ECS as a basis for organising and classifying information. This will change gradually as old IT systems reach the end of their lifecycle and are replaced with new systems and underlying data management standards. For now, the uptake of the ECS is mainly happening in small or medium-sized projects.

From chaos to order in 12 months: The Library’s shared drive project

This case study illustrates a successful implementation of the ECS as a tool for improving information management and communication in the University Library.

It all began in 1997 when the University Library decided to introduce a file share.

Over 200 staff had a file share mapped to a particular drive on their computer and file "sharing" began in earnest. Over twelve years the number of folders proliferated like breeding rabbits.

In the absence of any guidelines, all thinkable misdemeanours against good record keeping were committed. Folders were named after individuals or work groups and once the individual left or the work group changed the folder remained, making information retrieval for subsequent staff a baffling exercise.

Official records like meeting minutes were maintained by administrative staff but working documents used by project teams or work groups were the responsibility of that work group. This led to the creation of multiple copies of documents and different versions, making specific information difficult to find. At the same time personal and workgroup information was jumbled together. The cost in terms of wasted time, overcrowded storage space, and risks to information privacy were substantial.

Late in 2008, after a decade of *ad hoc* activity, an executive decision was made to clean up the mess and introduce the Enterprise Classification Scheme to the Library shared drive.

The project began with publicising the Enterprise Classification Scheme (ECS) across the library. A number of forums were held where the ECS was presented and explained and staff had the opportunity to ask questions. One of the recurrent stumbling blocks for staff was that within the scheme, there was no function called ‘Library’. The project team explained that the scheme was not about structures but functions and that the Library operated across a number of functions in the University. For librarians used to a subject based approach to classification the concept of a function based approach took some time to be understood.

As well as forums the project team visited work groups and explained the operation of the ECS. A pilot group volunteered to work with the project team in applying the scheme. This was a time consuming process but particularly valuable for members of the project team. Despite being from allied disciplines (records management, library and information management), team members had differing understandings of the same terms.

The ECS was introduced gradually and at all stages of the project, staff were reassured that files would not be deleted from the shared drive.

The first step in the restructure was to move all the loose documents stored on the fileserver into one folder called "LOOSE DOCUMENTS". Staff were asked to claim these and save them into the ECS using the document naming guidelines outlined in the user manual.

The next step was the formation of a spreadsheet listing over 200 files at the top level of the fileserver. Again staff were asked to claim any folder they were actively using. Any unclaimed folders were then placed in a folder called "ORPHAN DOCUMENTS"

This left just 57 folders. Over a period of a few months, library staff were encouraged to save any documents they accessed into the ECS, again using the document naming guidelines.

In the last stages of the project these folders were placed in a folder called "OLD SCHEME" folders. At this stage the 14 ECS folders were promoted to the top level and after a transition period the three "old" folders were made read only.

The project ended in December 2009. The project began with 223 folders at the top level of the shared drive. At the conclusion of the project there were 17 folders. Three folders represented the "legacy" folders of Loose Documents, Orphan Folders and Old Scheme and the remaining 14 folders are of the Enterprise Classification Scheme. Since the project ended the Loose Documents folder has been archived. In time the other "legacy folders" will be removed and their contents archived.

Old habits die hard: embedding the ECS in everyday practice

Since the University Library's fileserver project ended, the challenge has been to maintain the new-found order.

One strategy used to promote the new system was to establish a "community of practice" – a network of people across the Library who were interested in good information management practice and could see the advantage of maintaining order in the shared drive.

Local Information Management Experts or LIMEs as they were called were nominated from work groups across the Library.

The Local Information Management Expert (LIME) is responsible for providing local first contact support for staff in the use of the Enterprise Classification Scheme and the Library shared drive. LIMEs conduct local shared drive training and audit work group-specific folders in the shared drive. They help maintain consistent acronym entries and induct new staff in correct shared drive usage. They also help propagate naming standards for folders and documents

Their role is recognised by supervisors in the performance development plan of individual staff members.

To support the LIMEs in their role a series of four forums was planned for 2010. At the time of writing, three forums have been held. The first two were held in a small tutorial room but the layout of the room is not conducive to sharing. Participants sit in rows of seats which face a screen at the front of

the room. While this is good for showing real life examples in the library shared drive it does not encourage participation. With this in mind the third forum for the year has been planned for a bigger room. Participants will sit around a table and lunch will be provided.

LIMEs are encouraged to make records management a standing agenda item at work group meetings. They have been involved in the Library Intranet renewal project, as a reference group providing advice to the project manager and representing the views of their work group on desirable intranet content. LIMEs are being given opportunities to participate in other Library projects that touch on staff development, internal capability-building and improved information management and communication. The individual LIME feels appreciated and encouraged, and gains a broader perspective on the Library's operations. This helps them to be an effective change advocate with their colleagues

The next stage is developing a community of practice that it is self sustaining.

Nick De Nardis, Associate Director Net Communications. Wayne State University in a blog post in January 2009 , defined six degrees of participation:

1. Observing
2. Searching
3. Conversing
4. Connecting
5. Creating
6. Controlling

At this stage it seems clear the LIMEs have been observers, searchers and conversers thus far. Of course their participation pattern is uneven across the group; some have been more active than others. If just one or two make the leap from these relatively low-key forms of participation into the much more active 'connecting' or 'creating' roles, then there's a good chance the network will become self-sustaining, and will need less effort from a coordinator/leader to keep going -- and growing.

One of the of the Library's larger programs has established a small working group that meets fortnightly to review their disposal schedules, discuss document-sharing practices and sort out any problems or questions that arise. Benefits of this approach have been finding documentation about why previous decisions were made, which helped with current decisions and improved communication and understanding within the group about particular topics. A large number of documents were deleted from the fileserver. This intensive approach might not be necessary for small teams but has benefits for slightly larger groups

Making it large: promoting the ECS across the University

The Records and Policy group was moved back into the University Secretariat at the start of 2010, but they and the Library's Information Management team are both keen to continue the collaborative partnership they had started to develop whilst reporting to the same senior director. The Library's experience with adopting the Enterprise Classification Scheme is still a work in progress, but there are aspects of the process that can be used as models for other organisational units to follow.

The University Library operates an Information Management Advisory Service that provides internal consultancy services and expert advice to University departments on all aspects of information management. IMAS runs an outreach and education program that includes regular information forums <http://imas.unimelb.edu.au/forums/imas>

At these forums the Enterprise Classification Scheme is presented and the Library Shared Drive project is described as a case study in implementing the scheme. As a result of this promotional work, IMAS regularly engages with Records and Policy and other University departments on projects that employ the ECS to improve local information-sharing and record-keeping.

Similarly, the LIMEs network is emerging as an example of how to ensure the results of an ECS implementation project are sustainable in the longer term.

At the beginning of 2010, as part of the implementation of Responsible Division Management 2010 the University identified a number of 'practice leaders' whose role is to develop appropriate standards, frameworks and systems in their areas of professional expertise. There are practice leaders for Advancement, Facilities Management and Sustainability, Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology Services, Knowledge Partnerships, Marketing Communications, Occupational Health and Safety & Injury Management, Records Management, Research, Student Recruitment, Student Services.

Part of the Records Management Practice Leader's role is to create a community of practice involving professional staff working in records-related roles in business centres and other relevant parts of the University. This community of practice has many similarities with the University Library's LIMEs network, and early indications are that the two groups will be able to learn from, and build upon, each other's experiences.

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